

To: Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Board
From: Nancy Selman
Date: February 2003
Re: Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2003

Next meeting dates: Second Tuesday of every month. 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10, 7/8, 8/12, 9/9, 10/14, 11/11, 12/9.

In attendance: See attached Attendance List.

- 1) Solar-thermal Greenhouse Project. Chris Warfel (ENTECH Engineering, technical consultant to the Fund) has been asked to provide design assistance for a solar/thermal system for a solar –assisted radiant heated greenhouse at a sustainable farm owned by the Audubon Society, the Jamestown Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy. The project would include an outreach and education component. Chris estimates it would require 80 hours to provide design for the system and assist with the bid process. The group would also like a grant to pay for the solar thermal system.
 - a) The main issue is that the legislation which created the Fund defines “...renewable energy resources (to) mean power generation technologies that produce electricity....” As a result, the Fund has not been used in the past to support solar thermal projects. The project as proposed is not known to have a PV component.
 - b) There was considerable discussion regarding the technologies eligible for funding under the legislation. There seemed to be consensus that certain other renewable technologies and/or systems such as solar thermal, solar domestic hot water, and biodiesel thermal applications should be supported by the Fund. This will likely require a change to the legislation, and the bill introduction date for this session of the legislature is before the next meeting date of the Advisory Board. Because the group does not feel ready to introduce a bill so soon, it was decided that a letter would be sent to the legislature providing an update on the new advisory board and indicating intentions regarding changes to the legislation to include non-power generating renewable systems.
 - c) Chris will get more information on the greenhouse project, including whether there might be a PV component.
 - d) Bill Lueker will provide a legal interpretation of the mandate under the current legislation.
 - e) Nancy/ Janice will write letter to legislature.
- 2) Wind/PV Incentives. The Board agreed to raise the solar credit for homeowners and businesses and will take up the issue of wind credits next meeting. A request was made to provide an explanation of the solar credits for non-profits, which are greater than the “standard” incentive. This explanation is provided below.
 - a) PV: The incentives and qualifying criteria are as follows:
 - i) For homeowners and businesses, the Board has increased the PV credit from \$3 per watt to \$5 per watt.
 - ii) For non-profits the Fund will pay:
 - (1) 90% of first \$50,000 of system cost.
 - (2) 80% of next \$50,000 up to \$100,000.
 - (3) 70% of system cost over \$100,000.
 - (4) Applies to schools, local government buildings or high visibility non-profit facilities. Projects will be selected on the potential visibility and education value of the projects and will be used as outreach efforts to increase the awareness and knowledge of consumers with respect to PV.
 - iii) Solar on Schools program (see additional information below.)

- (1) Currently, schools contribute \$1000 towards the cost of a 2 kW system plus curriculum.
 - b) Recommendations regarding a wind credits will be presented next meeting. A subcommittee was formed consisting of Erich Stephens (technical consultant to the Fund), Nancy Selman, and Dave Jacobson to work on this.
- 3) NESEA. – has submitted requests for funding of 3 separate events.
 - a) The Board asked that criteria be set up to deal with requests of this nature from organizations asking for event or general funding. Janice and Nancy will work on recommendations including:
 - i) Fund budget for assistance to organizations.
 - ii) Target groups for outreach (Apeiron, NESEA, etc.)
 - iii) Criteria for sponsorship (outreach, renewables, etc.)
 - iv) Focus technologies/programs
 - b) The NESEA events are:
 - i) Green Buildings Conference – The Board agreed to fund \$5000, which is assumed to include some number of free admissions. In addition, will set aside \$2500 for registration “scholarships”.
 - ii) Tour of Solar Homes and Sustainability Series Workshops - no decision pending above.
- 4) Sterling Planet – Sterling is putting in an application for the Small Customer RFP. The application allows them to register their program with the Fund. (Under this program, they would not get any incentive money until they have customers.) Sterling is registering a product called "Green America" that would be a Renewable Energy Certificate product distinct from electricity supply. Product claims include Green-e certified, 100% new renewables, 30% wind, 20% small hydro, 50% biomass (clean wood waste/forest droppings) from generating facilities in New England Power Pool. Customers must sign up for at least 50% of usage.
 Bob Grace made a presented the following recommendation, which was adopted by the Board: To assure program credibility, identify deficiencies, and reject application without prejudice, pending:
 - a) Evidence of Green-e certification for the product offered, or restatement/clarification of Green-e certification plans and status.
 - b) Some evidence that Sterling Planet will be able to fulfill its claims regarding sources that are scarce in NE.
 - c) Statement that they will provide verification via NEPOOL GIS "reserved certificates", as required.
 - d) Other minor clarification points.
 Bob is drafting a letter outlining the above for Janice to sign.
- 5) Peoples' Power and Light – Erich Stephens, Executive Director of PP&L, presented a grant request for \$105,000 with a second request to be presented to the Fund in Q2 or Q3 (on the order of \$120,000). (A copy of the PPT presentation can be obtained by emailing Nancy.) The requested grant funds will be used to cover the startup costs of launching 2 new products: a tags product in Q1 2003 and a delivered product in Q2 2003. The Board approved Janice negotiating with Erich, subject to the following parameters:
 - a) Funding of the initial request will be broken into smaller payments to be funded on an as-required basis according to development milestones to be negotiated with PP&L.
 - b) The Board will consider a proposal for the second round of grant financing, assuming certain milestones are met. Examples of such milestones are successful design of a delivered product in concert with Mass Energy and a threshold numbers of tags customers or members. Janice will negotiate these with PP&L.

- c) PP&L agrees to repay the grant once the organization reaches profitability (in concert with lowering the product cost as necessary to remain competitive and maintaining a level of marketing effort which results in expected market penetrations.)
- d) The Fund has representation on PP&L's board.
- 6) David, Janice and Nancy will determine an overall budget for the Fund for next meeting.
- 7) Submarine museum project – Chris will get more information to present at the February meeting.
- 8) Apeiron –completed 5 workshops during Fall 2002 and in the process identified 6 additional groups for which it would like to put on workshops. Apeiron is asking for \$3000 per workshop. The issue was raised as to whether \$3000 per workshop is the right amount, as it seems as though this number must include Apeiron overhead that is not directly attributable to the workshops (funding of the general budget.) Nancy will ask Brad Hyson for a budget for the workshops. The workshop for the legislature will be organized by Janice and not contracted to Apeiron. Funding for Apeiron's general budget will be considered subject to #3 above. Will circulate a copy of the Apeiron PPT (note: this will be done at the next meeting due to the size of the file.)
- 9) Projects - A list detailing status and history of current projects was circulated.
- 10) Clean Energy States Alliance – Janice provided an update to the group on the activities of CESA. CESA is an offshoot of the Clean Energy Funds Network, a group which was formed to bring together the systems benefit charge (SBC) and public benefits funds being formed in many states to fund the development of renewables. CESA members fund joint projects, share information and generally take advantage of the synergies that exist among these various funds.
 - a) CESA is changing its funding structure from the original foundation support for CEFN to being funded by members (SBC and public benefits funds of various states.) The RI Fund's share for 2003 is approximately \$27,000.
 - b) CESA has many ongoing programs, including small ones that are funded out of the general budget, and large ones that have their own budgets. Support of the large projects is not mandatory. The RI Fund is providing \$50,000 of support for a \$550,000 project to do consumer research on renewables and design advertising materials (2 print ads, 2 television and 2 radio commercials.)
- 11) Department of Labor and Training (DLT) – Janice's efforts to institute a license for solar installers is meeting with new frustrations. DLT does not want to have a solar installers' license. DLT wants the State Energy Office (SEO) to provide a solar refresher course for the plumbers and electricians. Electricians will continue to be the contractor of record on PV jobs. In lieu of being able to get a new installer's license program, Janice wants institute a list of solar-qualified plumbers and electricians. Taking the refresher course and staying active in the solar market will be prerequisites to being included on the list. The training is estimated to cost \$2000 for 30-40 contractors and was approved by the Board. Having electricians as the prime contractor increases the cost of the job. Part of the rationale for increasing the solar credit (#2 above) is to offset this cost.
- 12) Solar on Schools – A decision was made to continue the program after all the installations for the first 6 schools are complete. The Solar on Schools contract will be rebid. Schools will be allowed to self-select. Chris Warfel will contact Solar Works to address the current software issue.

Decisions

- 1) The solar credit will be raised from \$3 to \$5 per watt.
- 2) \$5000 will be provided to the NESEA Green Buildings Conference. An additional \$2500 will be made available for registration grants for this event.

- 3) The proposal made by Sterling was rejected pending Sterling fixing certain deficiencies in the request.
- 4) Approval for Janice to negotiate grant funding in the amount of \$105,000 initially and approximately \$120,000 in 6-9 months for PP&L was given by the Board.
- 5) The Fund will make a presentation to the legislature (proposed by Apeiron).
- 6) Funding (\$2000) for a workshop for plumbers and electricians was approved.
- 7) Solar on Schools program will be continued.

Actions

- 1) Nancy and Janice to draft letter to update the legislature including additional technologies for funding.
- 2) Chris Warfel will obtain more information on greenhouse and submarine projects.
- 3) Nancy, Erich and David will provide recommendations on increasing the wind credits.
- 4) Nancy and Janice will make recommendations regarding event/general funding for outreach organizations.
- 5) Bob Grace will draft a letter to Sterling for Janice's signature.
- 6) Nancy and Bob will work with Erich Stephens to come up with milestones for funding PP&L.
- 7) David Jacobson, Janice and Nancy will present a budget for 2003 at the next meeting.
- 8) Nancy will ask Apeiron to provide a budget for the next five workshops.
- 9) SEO will conduct workshop for plumbers and electricians. A list of "solar-qualified" plumbers and electricians will be instituted.
- 10) Chris Warfel will contact Solar Works to check on software issues with Solar on Schools program.

Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund
Attendance
January 14, 2003

Canada, Kate
Capobianco, Julie
Ciminero, Gary
Condon, Pat
D'Ovidio, Christopher
Grace, Bob
Hartley, Doug
Hill, Michael J.
Howe, Tim
Jacobson, David
Keller, Janet
Lueker, William
Michaud, Richard
Moskal, John
Penfield, Matthew
Rose, Vin
Selman, Nancy
Stearns, David
Stephens, Erich
Teichert, Kurt
Warfel, Chris